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The Richter Rauzer Reborn

Zdenko Kozul & Alojzije Jankovic



The Richter Rauzer Reborn,

Restyle your repertoire
with the razor-sharp Kozul variation.



Zdenko Kozul & Alojzije Jankovic

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Zdenko Kozul

&

**Alojzije
Jankovic**



Preface

The idea to write this book appeared about ten years ago when I had already accumulated a large number of tournament games in the Rauzer variation of the Sicilian Defense. Many colleagues and friends told me then that I should write a book about this variation because in chess circles, I am recognized as one of the main and most persistent protagonists of this opening. In my long professional career I have had the opportunity to play this variation against the world's top grandmasters and probably some of my victories in those games have contributed to the association of this variation with my name. The outcome of a game does not always correspond to the outcome of the opening stage, so it's hard to evaluate a variation solely in terms of percentage points scored in it, but altogether I can say that usually I emerged from the opening with a satisfactory position.

However, in the early years, I was simply not ready for the realization of a book project. More than a decade has passed and in the meantime I have started to work as a trainer in the Croatian Chess Federation and significantly reduced the number of tournaments I play in.

One of the young Croatian players with whom I started working was Alojzije Jankovic, at that time a young talent and today a grandmaster and colleague from the National team. As a player at the beginning of his career, he had to create an opening repertoire and his personal choice against 1.e4 was the Sicilian and precisely this Rauzer variation.

I have to mention that it was his voluntary choice, as I am absolutely against the practice of a coach consciously or unconsciously imposing his choices or style of play on a young player. In the years that followed we continued to accumulate games and experience in this variation, and realized that it would make sense for us to combine our efforts in the writing of such a book.

The variation has developed tremendously in the last twenty-three years and has acquired many adherents at the grandmaster level. Thus, in a chess database we can find that in addition to experienced aficionados such as Yermolinski, Damljanović, Nevednichy, yours truly and others, followed new players like Kotronias, Baklan, Acs, Lupulescu, Jankovic, etc. for whom the Rauzer is one of the main weapons against 1.e4. How did we envision this book? Our main goal was to offer to players who are in the process of creating a repertoire, a variation which is not so much explored (such as the Najdorf, Dragon, etc.) , and yet leads to rich and complicated positions. One of the advantages of the Rauzer compared to its more popular brothers in the Sicilian is that there are much fewer forcing lines and playing these positions primarily requires good understanding and knowledge of ideas and motifs rather than just memorizing the moves.

Besides, I would also like to mention another important point that attracted me to the Rauzer at the time I was creating my fighting repertoire for open tournaments: there are virtually no simple and forced lines that lead to a draw! The pawn structures that arise even in the event of mass simplifications always hide some possibilities for further play and the variation is certainly interesting for players who like to disturb the balance and want to play for a win with the Black pieces.

On the other hand, I also believe that this will be an interesting addition to the libraries of established players who might want to expand their repertoire or simply learn more about this variation.

It should be emphasized that the analysis and recommendations are the result of many years of analysis and work as well as vast experience gathered through many games which we have played. Therefore, I believe that the evaluation of positions and lines is in most cases correct and accurate. Of course, there are positions that will require further verification in tournament games since practical tests are the best way to give a final judgment on the value of a particular continuation or an entire line.

Obviously in our work we did use chess engines like Houdini, Rybka and others, but when analyzing the positions and critical moments we always tried to think practically and to take into account the circumstances of a tournament game. That means when selecting the moves, seeking a game plan or evaluating the positions we primarily relied on our intuition and experience of playing these positions while engines were a welcome check on our analysis. Often we had a position in which the best move or plan is only the fourth or fifth proposal of the engine and sometimes the final assessment of a line differed significantly to that of computers! Without pretensions to give a final assessment or to seek an absolute truth, we wanted to make a practical and useful guide for tournament players which would facilitate their preparation while playing in tournaments.

Let's briefly touch upon several main themes of the book. A large section of the book is devoted to positions where Black has allowed White to 'ruin' his pawn structure in exchange for the bishop pair. The newly arisen pawn structure determines plans for both sides. White will generally try to push f4-f5 to provoke the the advance of the e-pawn so he can exploit the d5-square. Black has two ways of responding to this: one, to keep his pawns as they are and try to use the e5-square with his bishop, knight or even queen. Black can also opt to block the center with e6-e5 after having driven away the c3 knight with a timely ...b4 and searching for counter play on the queenside or on the g-file. Both ways usually involve keeping the king in the center which is the most challenging aspect of Black's position. However, practice has shown that the Black king, protected by a phalanx of pawns and surrounded by his own pieces, is not such an easy target to get to. On the contrary, very often the White king becomes a target and the Black bishop actively placed on h6 turns out to be a significant attacking force!

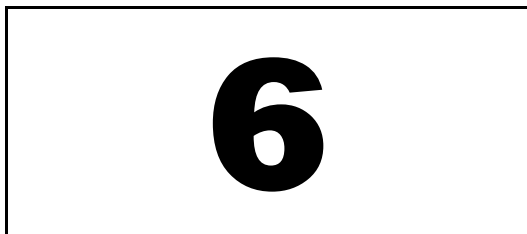
We will also see positions where Black sacrifices a pawn, in return for positional compensation from his bishop pair and control over the dark squares. Positional compensation will also be the theme in certain lines which lead all the way to the endgame in which Black's more active king will afford him adequate counter play. The reader can look forward to several endgames with truly unexpected moves. Players who like direct attacks on the king will also not be deprived: this variation of the Rauzer gives plenty of opportunity for devastating attacks on the king!

And now a few words about the structure of the chapters in the book. As you will see, we placed our emphasis on what could, based on its popularity in tournament practice, be considered the "main line" of this variation. Within it are many positions that are structurally typical for this line of the Rauzer. Furthermore, as this book is a practical tournament player guide, we give due attention to common sidelines and also to rarely met continuations which have their merits and deserve to be mentioned.

We hope that after reading this book, the combative Black player will be armed with sufficient knowledge and new ideas to confidently embark on the dynamic adventures in the Rauzer variation!

Zdenko Kozul,
Zagreb May 2014

Variation with 11. ♔b1 (or 11. f5) ♚b6 12. ♞xc6 ♝xc6 13. f5



1. e4 c5 2. ♞f3 ♞c6 3. d4 cxd4 4. ♞xd4 ♞f6 5. ♞c3 d6 6. ♝g5 e6 7. ♚d2 a6 8. 0-0-0 ♝d7 9. f4 b5 10. ♝xf6 gxf6

Diagram 60



Position after: 10... gxf6

In this chapter we will deal with positions where White wants to weaken black's structure with f4-f5. Unlike the other lines, we will reach open positions in which a central pawn break (e4-e5) will be often white's tactical motif. However, the

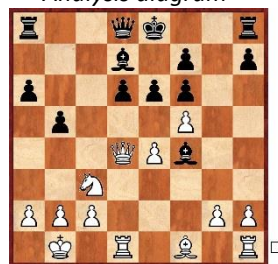
bishop pair will provide Black enough counter play in these sharp positions.

11. ♔b1

The big alternative here is:

A) 11. f5 When we mentioned open positions we mainly thought about this continuation. White does not care for the diagonal c1-h6, but wants to open the center immediately. 11... ♚b6 [Previously Black mostly thought that with this move order he should take 11... ♞xd4!? Kozul: "This continuation, I have tried 25 years ago against the great 'Magician from Riga'" (Michael Tal – editors note) 11... ♞xd4!? has not been refuted and is certainly a viable option. 12. ♚xd4 ♝h6+ 13. ♔b1 and now using this tempo to switch his bishop to the dominant e5 square after 13... ♝f4 (see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 13... ♝f4

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White will constantly be faced with a choice - to insert taking on e6 or not? It is difficult to give a general advice when it is good and when it isn't, it all depends on the specific occurring position. 14. ♘e2 {Kozul: "Let's see how play might develop after 14. fxe6 fxe6 15. ♘e2 ♙e5 16. ♖d2 0-0 (I have tried 16... ♙c6!?) 17. ♘d4 ♙xe4 18. ♘xe6 ♖e7, yet after 19. ♘f4 f5 20. ♙d3 0-0 21. ♗he1 ♙c6 white's position should be slightly preferable, Palac,M (2485) - Kozul,Z (2595) 0-1 Vinkovci 1993.) 17. ♘d4 (see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram

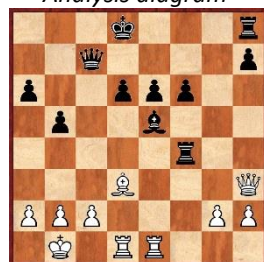


Position after: 17. ♘d4

A year later I improved with 17... f5 18. ♘f3 ♙c6 19. ♘xe5 (19. exf5! exf5∞) 19... dx5 20. ♖e1 ♖c7 with an unbalanced game. In the end I outplayed my opponent and won the game, Tolnai,T (2540)-Kozul, Z (2575) 0-1 Makarska 1994.} 14... ♙e5 15. ♖d2 exf5 Capturing is not mandatory, but since Black has a strong bishop on e5 he can afford the risk of weakening his light squares in the center. 16. exf5 ♙xf5 17. ♘f4 (Black has a solid position also after 17. ♘d4 ♙e6 18. ♘f3 f5 19. ♙d3 ♙g7♣ like in the game Van der Wiel,J (2530) - Kozul, Z (2580) 1/2 Wijk aan Zee 1991.)

17... ♖b6 18. ♙d3 ♙e6 19. ♙e4 ♗c8 20. ♗he1 ♗c4 21. ♘xe6 Black will lose one of his strong bishops, but his pawn structure will improve. And also, yes-Black is a pawn up! (Safer was 21. ♘d3) 21... fxe6 22. ♖h6 ♖c7 23. ♙g6+ ♙d8 24. ♙d3 ♗f4 And now White played too ambitious 25. ♖h3? (see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 25. ♖h3?

underestimating 25... ♗b4! 26. ♗xe5 ♖c3! The move that the ex-world champion probably overlooked in his calculation! 27. b3 ♖xe5♣ the black advantage is obvious, but later I played imprecisely and the game ended in a draw, Tal,M (2610)-Kozul,Z (2490)1/2 Marseille 1989."] 12. ♘xc6 ♙xc6 13. fxe6 {We have already

Analysis diagram



Position after: 14... h5!

Variation with 11. ♔b1 (or 11. f5) ♚b6 12. ♞xc6 ♝xc6 13. f5

demonstrated that Black is fine in positions that may arise after 13. ♚e2 b4 14. ♞d5 ♟xd5 15. exd5 ♟h6+ 16. ♔b1 e5 17. ♚h5 ♟e3 18. h4 ♔e7↔ Zecevic,D(2281)-Jankovic, A (2537) 0-1 Zagreb 2013.} 13... fxe6 14. ♚f4 {Now 14. ♚e2?! would be a serious inaccuracy since after 14... ♚c5 15. ♞d5 Black can play 15... 0-0-0! with the better prospects} 14... h5!

(see analysis diagram, previous page)

A well-known motif in similar positions! Black does not want to waste time defending the f-pawn. He goes for activity! 15. ♔b1 [If White takes the pawn 15. ♚xf6 then after 15... ♚e3+ 16. ♔b1 ♜h6 he is forced to exchange the queens 17. ♚f3 (17. ♚h4 ♟e7↔) 17... ♚xf3 18. gxf3 ♜f6↔ and the bishop pair ensure plenty compensation for the pawn.] 15... ♚c5! 16. ♚xf6 [Black is fine after 16. ♟d3 which was seen in the game Tiviakov,S (2640) –Galliamova,A (2505) 1-0 Elista 1998. 16... ♚e5 17. ♚f2 ♟g7 18. ♜he1 0-0 19. ♞d5 ♟b7 {In the game Black played 19... ♜f7 20. c3 , but necessary was 20... f5! (Black made a mistake with 20... ♜b8? giving White 21. ♞b4!±) 21. ♚b6 ♜c8↔ with good counter play} 20. ♞e7+ ♔f7 21. ♚b6 looks unpleasant, but Black has 21... ♚c5! 22. ♚xb7 ♜a7 23. ♚c6 ♔xe7 24. ♚xc5 dxc5↔ with a nice position for him] 16... ♜h6

(see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 16... ♜h6

[Another possibility is 16... ♚e5!? 17. ♚xe5 dxe5 (see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 17... dxe5

Leading to an interesting endgame. Black is a pawn down and due to his double pawns in the center, he has a pawn's deficit on both wings. Yet, his position has some advantages: a strong bishop pair (especially the dark-squared bishop.) His static capital in the center still has a purpose because it controls many key squares and in the end the black rooks could control the open files. Bearing these issues in mind, we believe that Black is o.k. and can hold his position. Kozul" Curiously, I've played this position many times and only few games ended in a draw!" 18. a3 (18. ♟d3 ♟c5

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19. ♖e2 ♜g8 20. g3 ♗e7 21. ♜hf1 ♜af8
 22. a3 ♕f2 An important motif! Black prepares undermining the kingside's pawns.
 23. ♗c1 h4 24. gxh4 ♜g4 25. ♗b3?! ♜xh4
 26. ♜d2 ♜hf4 27. ♜e2 ♕e8 We can see that Black successfully paralysed white's pieces, slowly taking over the initiative.
 28. c4 ♕b6 and Black was slightly better in Baron,T (2455)-Kozul, Z (2595) 0-1 Rijeka 2010.) 18... ♕c5 (Black can also play 18... h4!?) 19. ♕e2 ♗e7 20. h4 ♕d4
 21. ♕f3 ♕xc3 22. bxc3∞ with an unclear position in Volokitin,A (2679) -Kozul, Z (2591) 1-0 Sarajevo 2005.] 17. ♜f4 {Even better for Black is 17. ♜d4 ♜xd4 18. ♜xd4 ♗e7 And now White returned the pawn, not allowing a strong bishop on e5.
 19. e5 dxe5 and Black was slightly better in Svetushkin,D (2557) -Kozul,Z (2600) 0-1 Kusadasi 2006.} 17... 0-0-0 Precise {Not bad is also the rook transfer 17... ♜a7!? 18. ♕d3 ♜f7∞ which occurred in Solleveld,M (2463)-Brandenburg, D (2375) 1/2 Enschede 2006.} 18. ♜f7 leads to an unclear position after [Black will quickly grasp the initiative after 18. g3? ♕g7 19. ♕h3 ♜f6 20. ♜d2 (20. ♜h4 b4⚡) 20... ♜f2! (Stronger than 20... ♗c7 which was played in Tukhaev,A (2536) -Murariu,A (2526) 1/2 Mamaia 2012.) 21. ♜d3 And now after the forced 21... b4! 22. ♕xe6+ (22. ♗e2? ♕b5++) 22... ♗b7 23. ♗d5 (23. ♗e2? ♜e5++) 23... ♕b5 24. ♜b3 ♕c4 25. ♜xb4+ (In the case of 25. ♜a4 Black has a nice tactical hit with 25... b3!-+) 25... ♜xb4 26. ♗xb4 ♕xe6⚡ Black ends up with a clear advantage.] 18... ♗b8∞

11... ♜b6 12. ♗xc6 ♕xc6 13. f5

Diagram 61



Position after: 13. f5

The move which was played by the current world champion Magnus Carlsen in his youth, but already as a strong GM!

13... ♜c5

And now:

A) 13... h5!?

B) 13... b4?

A) An immediate 13... h5!? Is playable for Black and very often transposes to well known positions. 14. fxe6 [14. ♜e1 b4 15. ♗d5 {Black is better after 15. ♗e2 e5 16. ♜h4 ♗e7 17. ♗g3 ♕h6 18. ♗xh5 ♕g5 19. ♜g4 ♜c5 20. h4 (Now 20. ♕d3 leads to a position transposing to 13.f5 ♜c5 14. ♕d3 h5 15. ♜e1 b4 16. ♗e2 e5 17. ♜h4 ♗e7 18. ♗g3 ♕h6 19. ♗h5 ♕g5 20. ♜g4) 20... ♕e3⚡ and later Black duly won in Hou, Yifan(2612) -Li Chao (2656) 0-1 Dazhou 2011.} 15... ♕xd5 16. exd5 e5 17. ♜h4 (Ili 17. c3 a5 18. cxb4 axb4 19. ♜c1 ♜a7 20. ♕c4 ♕h6) 17... ♗e7 18. ♕e2

Variation with 11. ♔b1 (or 11. f5) ♚b6 12. ♞xc6 ♝xc6 13. f5

♞h6↔ And as we already know, Black obtains good counter play.] 14... fxe6 (see analysis diagram)



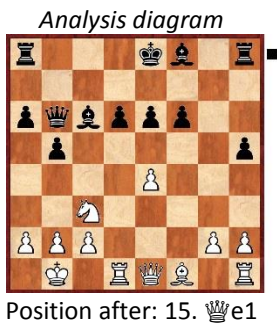
We now look into:

- A1) 15. ♚f4
- A2) 15. ♞d3
- A3) 15. ♚e1

A1) 15. ♚f4 ♚c5 is another transposition, this time to 11.f5 ♚b6 12.♞c6 ♝c6 13. fe6 fe6 14. ♚f4 h5 15. ♝b1 ♚c5

A2) 15. ♞d3 ♞h6 16. ♚e2 0-0-0 17. ♚xh5 ♞e3 18. ♚g4 ♞d7 19. ♚f3

A3) 15. ♚e1 Now White prepares a



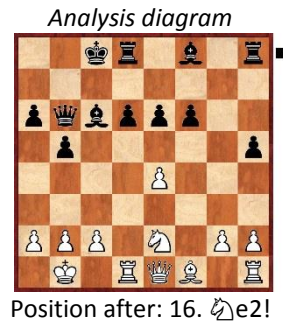
knight jump forcing Black to react. The best way to neutralize white's threat is to play.

(see analysis diagram, previous column)

The alternatives are:

- A3.1) 15... 0-0-0?!
- A3.2) 15... ♚a7
- A3.3) 15... ♞f7!∞

A3.1) Dubious is 15... 0-0-0?! since now White ignites pressure on e6 with 16. ♞e2! and Black is facing problems. I.e. (see analysis diagram)



Variations are:

- a) 16... ♞xe4
- b) 16... ♞g7?!
- c) 16... ♞h6

a) If 16... ♞xe4 then White returns 17. ♞c3→ with ♞d3 to follow
 b) Or 16... ♞g7?! 17. ♞f4→
 c) 16... ♞h6 17. ♞d4 ♞d7 18. c4!→ White exploits the position of black's king and with this push he seizes the initiative!

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A3.2) Let's mention that in case of **15... ♖a7** also follows **16. ♗e2→**

A3.3) **15... ♔f7!∞**

B) It is important to mention that Black cannot take white's pawn on e4 with **13... b4?** **14. ♗e2 ♕xe4** as White quickly develops an attack returning the invested material with interest. **15. ♗g3 ♕b7** [**15... ♕d5** **16. ♗h5** **0-0-0** **17. ♗f4!±** (**17. ♗xf6 ♕b7±**)] **16. fxe6 fxe6** **17. ♖f4 ♕e7** {**17... f5** **18. ♕c4** **d5** **19. ♖e5**} **18. ♕e2** **d5** **19. ♖he1** **e5** **20. ♖g4±**

14. ♕d3



Position after: 14. ♕d3

Black can (and should) keep the central tension and delay the (e6-e5) blockade.

14... h5

(see Diagram 63)

Diagram 63



Position after: 14... h5

That means however, that now Black should be ready for a central battle and e4-e5 tactical motifs.

There are the following branches:

A) 14... b4

B) 14... ♖a7

A) Another possibility for Black is **14... b4** A logical plan for Black, however probably not a fully equalizing method. **15. ♗e2 e5** (see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 15... e5

Now we are coming to the starting position for this line. White now has to make up his mind. Will it be the usual knight ma-

Variation with 11. ♔b1 (or 11. f5) ♚b6 12. ♞xc6 ♜xc6 13. f5

noeuvre to h5 or will he try to stop black's queenside initiative? His best option here is to play on the queenside!

We will analyse here:

A1) 16. g4!?

A2) 16. ♞g3

A3) 16. c3!

A1) An interesting move is **16. g4!?** With the idea to take space and keeping Black occupied. (see analysis diagram)



We will also pay attention to following:

A1.1) 16... h5!?

A1.2) 16... a5!?

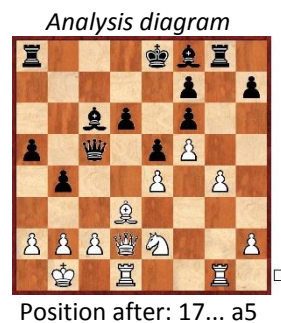
A1.3) 16... ♜g8

A1.1) Possible reaction is **16... h5!?** 17. g5 fxg5 {Even 17... h4! can be tried} 18. ♞xg5 and now it is necessary to restrict the knight with 18... h4∞

A1.2) Black can immediately start with his queenside advance **16... a5!?** 17. g5 fxg5 18. ♞xg5 a4 19. ♜hg1 h5 White was threatening ♞f6. 20. ♞h4 ♜a7 21. f6 ♔d8 22. ♜g5 ♔c7 23. ♜xh5 ♜xh5 24.

♞xh5 ♔b6 25. c4 a3 26. b3 ♞e3= and the position was roughly equal in Debevec,B (2260) -Pranjic,M (2350) 1/2 ICCF 2007.

A1.3) 16... ♜g8 17. ♜hg1 [Too soft is 17. h3?! h5 18. ♞g3 hxg4 19. hxg4 (19. ♞h5 allows Black to activate his dark-squared bishop 19... ♔e7 20. ♜hg1 ♜h8 21. hxg4 ♞h6↔) 19... ♜xg4 20. ♞h5 ♔e7↔] 17... a5 (see analysis diagram)



Now we have following choices:

A1.3a) 18. g5

A1.3b) 18. c3

A1.3c) 18. h4

A1.3a) If **18. g5** then Black can react with 18... ♔e7∞ [Unclear is 18... fxg5! 19. ♜xg5 ♜h8!∞ with the idea of h5. (Mistake is 19... ♜xg5? 20. ♞xg5 a4 since White is faster after 21. ♞g3 a3 22. ♞h5 ♞d4 23. ♞f6+ ♔d8 24. c3! bxc3 25. ♞c2↑)]

A1.3b) 18. c3 h5↔ Black obtains good counter play. {Fine was 18... ♜b8 19. cxb4 ♞xb4= as played in Pijpers,A (2332)-Nuri,K (2256) 1-0 Groningen 2011.}

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A1.3c) 18. h4 Other moves are not dangerous. 18... h6= {Black can even try 18... a4!?

A2) 16. ♖g3 The most played move 16... h5 17. h4 {17. ♖e2 h4 18. ♗h5 ♕e7 19. ♖g4 ♘h6 20. ♖xh4 ♙g5 21. ♖g4 is transposing to 14. ♙d3 h5 15. ♖e1 b4 16. ♗e2 e5 17. ♖h4 ♕e7 18. ♗g3 ♘h6 19. ♗h5 ♙g5 20. ♖g4} (see analysis diagram)



Key alternatives are:

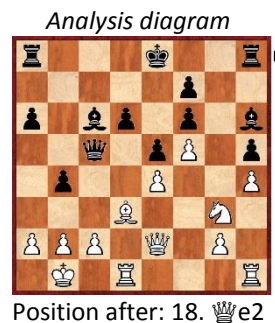
- A2.1) 17... ♕e7**
- A2.2) 17... a5?**
- A2.3) 17... ♙h6**

A2.1) Too slow is 17... ♕e7 since after 18. ♖e2 ♙h6 White can prevent the exchange of queens with 19. ♖he1 a5 20. ♗xh5 a4 21. ♙c4 a3 [Black is not ready for 21... b3? 22. cxb3 ♖hb8 since White has 23. ♗xf6! (23. ♖d3? was played in Colon Garcia,E (2173) -Perpinya Rofes, L (2387) 0-1 Barbera del Valles 2009.) 23... ♕xf6 24. ♖h5+- with a crushing advantage] 22. b3 ♙b5 23. ♖d5 ♙xc4 24. bxc4 ♖e3 25. ♖xe3 ♙xe3 26. ♖xe3 ♖xh5 27. g3± and

in the resulting endgame White was slightly better in Janos, J (2434) -Zivkovic, M (2334) 1/2 ICCF email 1999.

A2.2) White is also much faster after 17... a5? 18. ♖e2 a4 19. ♗xh5 ♕e7 20. g4 a3 21. ♙c4± like in Vuckovic,B (2458) -Blehm,P (2512) 1-0 Paget Parish 2001.

A2.3) 17... ♙h6 18. ♖e2 (see analysis diagram)



Some other moves deserve coverage too:

- A2.3a) 18... ♙e3?**
- A2.3b) 18... ♕e7**
- A2.3c) 18... ♖e3!**

A2.3a) How slow black's attack is you can witness after 18... ♙e3? 19. ♗xh5 ♕e7 20. ♖h3 ♙d4 21. g4± and later White won in Zawadzka,M (2266) -Dziuba,M (2447) 1-0 Krakow 2003.

A2.3b) 18... ♕e7 transposes to 17... ♕e7 18. ♖e2 ♙h6

A2.3c) 18... ♖e3! (see analysis diagram)

Variation with 11. ♔b1 (or 11. f5) ♚b6 12. ♞xc6 ♝xc6 13. f5

Analysis diagram



Position after: 18... ♚e3!

The best defence. Black should forget the attack and aim for an endgame. His pawn deficit would be compensated with ample active play over the h and g files.

Alternatively:

A2.3c1) 19. ♜h3?!

A2.3c2) 19. ♚xe3?!

A2.3c3) 19. ♞xh5

A2.3c1) Inaccurate is 19. ♜h3?! ♚xe2 20. ♞xe2 ♚e7 21. ♞f3 (see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 21. ♞f3

In his book GM Khalifman stops in this position with the commentary that the h5-pawn will fall. However, we think that

Black is more than o.k. 21... ♜ac8 22. ♞xh5 ♞a4 23. b3 ♞b5 24. g4 ♜c3! 25. ♞xf6 ♚xf6 26. g5+ ♚e7 27. f6+ ♚d8 28. gxh6 ♜xh6 29. ♜xd6+ ♚c7 and later Black converted her advantage in Dworakowska,J (2401)-Kosintseva,T (2477) 0-1 Gothenburg 2005.

A2.3c2) 19. ♚xe3?! is also dubious. 19... ♞xe3 20. ♞e2 ♚e7 21. ♞f3 ♜ac8 22. ♞xh5 ♜xh5! 23. ♞xh5 ♞xe4 and Black was much better in Malakhov, V (2605)-Miton,K (2443) 1/2 Yerevan 2000.

A2.3c3) 19. ♞xh5 ♚e7 20. ♚f1! (see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 20. ♚f1!

White must avoid the exchange of queens! [20. ♚xe3? ♞xe3 21. ♜h3 {21. g4 ♜ag8 (Black was slightly better after 21... a5 22. ♜h3 ♞c5 23. ♞g3 ♜ag8 24. ♞e2 ♞f2 in Iermito,S (2462) -Eliseev,U (2550) 0-1 Kocaeli 2013) 22. ♜h3 ♞c5 23. ♞e2 ♞xe4 24. ♞g3 ♞b7 and black's bishops were dominating in Dourerassou,J (2485) -Dubov,D (2629) 0-1 Warszawa 2013.} 21... ♜xh5 22. g4 (22. ♞e2!? ♜hh8 23. ♜xe3 ♜xh4 24. ♞f3 is maybe a better defen-

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sive setup for White, but still Black is slightly better) 22... ♖hh8 23. ♗xe3 ♖hx4 24. ♗g3 a5⎯ and Black was somewhat better in Borosova,Z (2302) -Kashlinskaya, A (2377) 1/2 Gaziantep 2012.] 20... ♕xe4 {Mistake is 20... a5? since White is much better after 21. g4± as in Thorhallsson,T (2367)-Gupta, A (2600) 1-0 London 2010.}

Now we have the following choices:

- a) 21. ♕xe4
- b) 21. g4!?
- c) 21. ♖h3

- a) Black is fine after 21. ♕xe4 ♖xe4↔
- b) Now a very interesting exchange sac 21. g4!? (see analysis diagram)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 21. g4!?

21... ♕hx1 Black should accept the challenge! 22. ♖hx1 ♖a7

(see analysis diagram, next column)

Analysis diagram



Position after: 22... ♖a7

[Unclear is 22... ♖b6!? 23. ♕c4∞] [22... ♖ad8 looks logically, but with this precise move White can keep the pressure! 23. ♖d5!∞ That's the move securing descent compensation for White, Black will face a hard time to equalize. {More forcing is 23. g5 since Black must give the piece 23... ♕xg5 (23... fxg5?? loses on spot after 24. ♖b7+↔) 24. hxg5 ♖xg5 In this position exchanging the queens leads to an advantage for Black due to his more active king! 25. ♕e2 a5 (Dangerous is taking 25... ♖xf5? since it allows White to use that square for his knight, e.g. 26. ♖f1 ♖g5 27. ♖g1 ♖e3 28. ♖b7+ ♖d7 29. ♖g2↑ with ♗g3 to follow; But possible is 25... d5! 26. ♖e1 a5 27. ♖f2 d4 28. ♖f3→ ♖d7=) 26. ♖b7+ (Nothing is achieved with 26. ♖g1 ♖e3 27. ♖g7 {27. ♖b7+ ♖d7 28. ♖g2 d5⎯} 27... d5 28. ♖h4 ♖h6↔) 26... ♖d7 27. ♖f3 d5 {Also a good option is 27... ♖g8!? 28. ♕b5 (28. ♕c4?? ♖g4-) 28... ♖c7=} 28. ♗g3 (28. ♖f2? leads to nowhere after 28... d4⎯) 28... ♖h2!↔ black's rook is very active on the second rank and takes the f2-square from white's queen!} (Black is fine after 23. ♖b7+?!]